



Who is currently living with HIV/AIDS?

October 2004

Overview

Since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts has increased every year. In the past five years, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS reported to the HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program increased by 20%.

Overall, there is not one profile of who is currently living with HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts. Rather, there are variations across gender, race/ethnicity and other demographic characteristics. For example, while over half of males living with HIV/AIDS are white (53%), the largest proportion of females living with HIV/AIDS is black (38%). Similarly, while nearly half (46%) of males living with HIV/AIDS were exposed to HIV infection through male-to-male sex, reported exposure modes are more evenly distributed among females. Thirty-four percent of females were exposed through injection drug use and 33% were exposed through heterosexual sex. Exposure to HIV infection also varies by race/ethnicity. The majority of white people were reported to have been exposed to HIV infection through male-to-male sex, Hispanic people through injection drug use and black people through heterosexual sex with a partner of unknown risk and HIV status (presumed heterosexual).

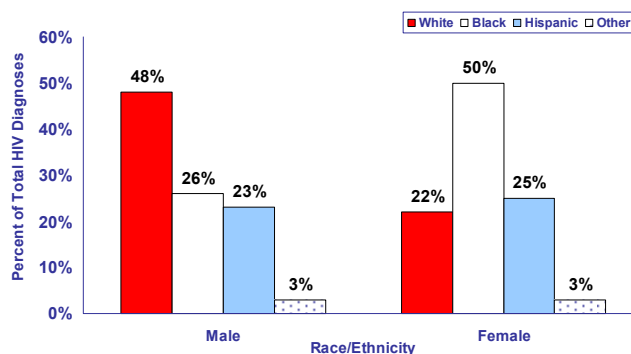
The profile of people living with HIV/AIDS also varies by geography. For example, the Western and Central health service regions have larger proportions of females compared to other regions and a higher proportion of people exposed to HIV through injection drug use. The Boston and Metrowest regions have higher proportions of males and males exposed to HIV through male-to-male sex.

The following summary provides a profile of all people living with HIV/AIDS on July 1, 2004 and describes the variations found within this population in more depth.

Gender and Race/Ethnicity

- Seventy-two percent of people living with HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts are male and 28% are female.
- Forty-seven percent of people living with HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts are white (non-Hispanic), 27% are black (non-Hispanic), 24% are Hispanic, 1% is Asian/Pacific Islander, and less than 1% is American Indian/Alaska Native. In contrast, black and Hispanic people each make up 6% of the Massachusetts population.

Figure 1 People Diagnosed with HIV Infection Within the Years 2001 to 2003 by Gender and Race/Ethnicity: MA



Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program, Data as of 7/1/04

- Among **males** living with HIV/AIDS, 53% are white (non-Hispanic), 22% are black (non-Hispanic) and 23% are Hispanic.
- Among **females** living with HIV/AIDS, 32% are white (non-Hispanic) 39% are black (non-Hispanic) and 28% are Hispanic.

Place of Birth, Race/Ethnicity and Gender

- Seventeen percent of all people living with HIV/AIDS were born outside the US, 12% were born in Puerto Rico or another US Dependency and 71% were born in the US.

Data Source: HIV/AIDS Case Data: Massachusetts Department of Public Health, HIV/AIDS Surveillance System, All Data as of 7/1/04

- Among people living with HIV/AIDS who are Asian/Pacific Islander, 80% were born outside the US, compared to 37% of black people, 15% of Hispanic people and 5% of white people.
- Twenty-four percent of females living with HIV/AIDS were born outside the US, compared to 14% of males.

Current Age

- On July 1, 2004, less than 1% of people living with HIV/AIDS were under 13 years old, 2% were 13-24 years old, 4% were 25-29 years old, 9% were 30-34 years old, 19% were 35-39 years old, 24% were 40-44 years old, 20% were 45-49 years old, and 21% were 50 years old or above.

Gender and Exposure Mode

- Male-to-male sex and injection drug use are the leading reported risks for HIV infection among all people living with HIV/AIDS, accounting for 33% and 30% of all exposures respectively.
- For **males**, male-to-male sex is the primary reported risk for HIV infection (46%), followed by injection drug use (28%).
- For **females**, injection drug use and heterosexual sex account for the most frequent exposures to HIV at 34% and 33%, respectively.

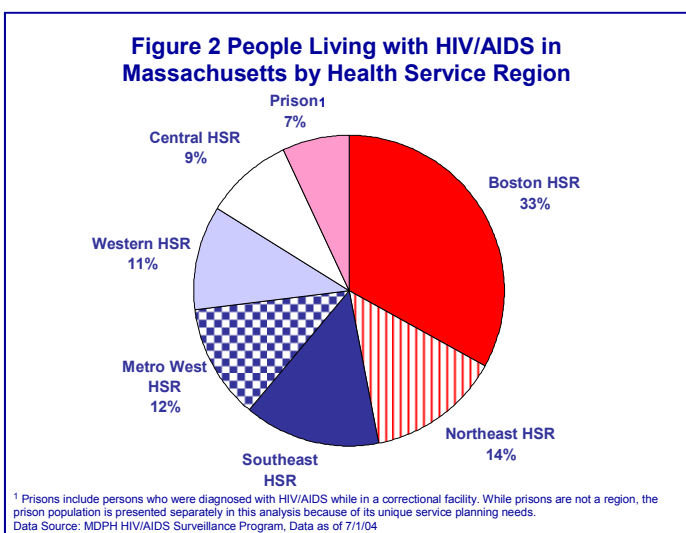
Race/Ethnicity and Exposure Mode

- Among **white people** living with HIV/AIDS, male-to-male sex is the most frequently reported risk for HIV infection, accounting for 53% of exposures.
- Injection drug use (26%) and heterosexual sex with partners with unknown risk and HIV status (presumed heterosexual) (30%) are the leading risks for HIV infection among **black people** living with HIV/AIDS.
- Among **Hispanic people** living with HIV/AIDS, the predominant risk for HIV infection is injection drug use, which accounts for nearly half (45%) of exposures.
- Among **Asian/Pacific Islanders** living with HIV/AIDS, the predominant risk for HIV infection is male-to-male sex, accounting for 38% of exposures.

Race/Ethnicity and Exposure Mode by Gender

- The distribution of exposure mode among **males** living with HIV/AIDS varies by race/ethnicity.
- Among **white males**, male-to-male sex is the primary reported risk for HIV infection, accounting for 66% of exposures.
- Among **black males**, exposure mode is more evenly distributed with injection drug use accounting for 31% of exposures, male-to-male sex 23%, and heterosexual sex with partners with unknown risk and HIV status (presumed heterosexual) 22%.
- Among **Hispanic males**, injection drug use is the leading reported risk for HIV infection, accounting for 51% of exposures.
- The distribution of **females** living with HIV/AIDS across exposure mode also varies by race/ethnicity.
- While the predominant mode of exposure among **white females** living with HIV/AIDS is injection drug use (52%), the predominant mode of exposure among **black females** is heterosexual sex with partners of unknown risk and HIV status (presumed heterosexual) (41%) and among **Hispanic females** is heterosexual sex (44%).

Regional Distribution



- While 33% of people living with HIV/AIDS were living in the Boston Health Service Region at the time of report, 12% of all Massachusetts residents were living there in 2000, according to the US Census.

Regional Distribution by Gender

- The distribution of gender among people living with HIV/AIDS varies by Health Service Region (HSR).
- The Central and Western regions have higher proportions of females among all those living with HIV/AIDS compared with other regions, at 37% each.
- The Boston region has the highest proportion of males among all those living with HIV/AIDS at 76%.

Regional Distribution by Race/Ethnicity

- The distribution of people living with HIV/AIDS by race/ethnicity varies by Health Service Region (HSR).
- **White (non-Hispanic) individuals** account for the largest proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS across race/ethnicity in all regions except the Western HSR, where Hispanic individuals are the largest group.
- The Boston HSR has the highest proportion (38%) of **black individuals** among those living with HIV/AIDS followed by the Metro West HSR (32%).
- The Western HSR has the highest proportion (50%) of **Hispanic individuals** among those living with HIV/AIDS followed by the Central HSR (34%).

Regional Distribution by Mode of Exposure

- Male-to-male sex is the mode of exposure reported for the largest proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS in the Boston (45%), Metro West (38%), and Southeast (35%) regions.
- Injection drug use is the mode of exposure reported for the largest proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS in the Central (40%) and Western (39%) regions.
- In the Northeast Region, male-to-male sex and injection drug use account for nearly the same proportion (30% and 27%, respectively) of exposures among people living with HIV/AIDS.

For more detailed information and a description of data limitations please see "HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts: An Epidemiologic Profile." For detailed data tables and technical notes see Appendix.

